My experience as an Atelier801 staff member

Peanut_butter #1
« Cónsul »
13:54

Hey everyone!

Most of you probably already know me but in case you don't, I am Matt and I was a sentinel for about two years. I was also part of the Funcorp and Fashion Squad team for a while but I decided to quit due to some personal, as well as game-related reasons.

Disregarding my issues and troubles, I would like to share the reasons I decided to quit the teams and hopefully start a discussion about everything that is about to be mentioned in this topic. Unfortunately, I can't be completely neutral with my views but I will try not to name names or direct my opinions towards specific people in the staff team. As for the staff, if you feel that something I've written is aimed at you, then you probably should think about it and potentially change your ways.

This won't be nice and I might even get muted, banned for the things I am about to say but I am completely fine digging my own grave by telling **my** truth. Obviously, people will try to defend one another here and I am completely ok with that but when the majority of people share the same views on one matter, that must mean something. And the solution to that isn't to continue ignoring eachother, but to finally look deeply into things and try and move forward with changes.

There are company- and staff-related issues that led me to quit the teams and stop playing Transformice every day like I used to.

Time to let the cat out of the bag and start with the staff-related issues. The staff feedback thread has been closed since February and the same problems that were mentioned almost six months ago are still present. Recently I've been reading the Staff FAQ and to my surprise (or not), the same issues are being discussed by players and staff members. Players will accuse staff members of not doing their job right and then staff members will say "deal with it" in a polite way. I have seen the guidelines for staff members and honestly, they're very strict but fair. Almost every rule-breaking case is listed and the sanctions you can get for them are fair and organized well. The problem isn't with the sheet and the sanctions. It is with the people giving them out.

Let's get to the point: staff favoring some people and then disregarding others as quilty or as someone who isn't worth their time at all. It might be a slight exaggeration but we're at a point where if you aren't friends with a staff member, you cannot even get into any teams because they'll most likely tell a story about you and then everyone immediately says no to your application. Do some digging and you will see that the staff are more likely to accept their friends into the teams rather than strangers who they have never or hardly seen before. Of course in real life this happens too... you are more likely to get a job if you are friends with the owners, but at this company, things are a little different. I have seen some people get accepted with mediocre applications while others with outstanding applications weren't. It's not like there's a limit to having moderators, sentinels, map crew, funcorp, module members, etc. but this thing can still happen. Guess it's easier brainwashing friends than strangers, ey?

Now for the "guilty" ones; let's be honest. Most of you who complain about being banned or muted are rightfully banned or muted and we shouldn't act like that isn't the case. People have to start taking responsibility for their own mistakes and hopefully learn from them. If you want to say a thing that you know will offend others, you might as well accept the possible mute you are going to get for that. And stop acting like it was just a joke because, in my personal opinion, it is pathetic that some people do this.
On the other hand, some people get banned, but this time, it is an unfair sanction placed on the player. If you are one of those players, you must know the struggle of trying to contact a mod just to be told that you should contact someone else... and when you do, that person says "I saw you hacking, you aren't getting unbanned". This is a serious issue that the staff members need to tackle and find a more efficient way of solving. I know there are some moderators with a good heart who will be lenient and remove the ban if it's the first sanction placed on the player or even a second sanction, but there are others who just don't care. Then, I must ask you, why are you a moderator? Just to place sanctions on people you *think* are breaking the rules and then not even give them a chance to explain themselves? If this happens once or twice a month, then it's not a huge issue to try and solve but the problem is that this happens almost daily on the game and people in the staff don't give a damn about trying to be more righteous. It's not an easy job but please try and be more correct and be extra-sure about sanctioning a rulebreaker. Don't just do it so you can move onto the next report.

I would like to explain myself on the "brainwashing" part. It's not literal brainwashing but you can see that staff members are always on the same page and no one dares to speak up against each other, most of the time they accept what their friends have to say and default to that mentality instead of trying to discuss the matters. My experience with this is to do with one specific player, although there are countless other examples. If you're from staff or the other end of the discussion, you will know who I am talking about. The staff has developed prejudices against certain players in the community and continues to do so. If you break rules and behave in a certain way, you can try to change all you want, the staff will still think you're immature and childish even 5 years later. It's like that image of you has been burnt inside their heads and will just never erase. New staff members, who truly act neutrally towards the player, will be told that they shouldn't act like that and that they shouldn't support these players because they broke some kind of rule months, years ago. I acknowledge that I'm too naive and even way too kind (which is why I was never the best Sentinel out there) but I do believe that people can change in a matter of months, if not weeks. And to keep the same distorted image of a player in your minds for years just because they used to behave poorly in the past is toxic. Voting on applications should be based on the application that you've received and the current behavior of the user, not their past behavior. It's good if you know how they used to behave but ultimately, it's not a reason to refuse anyone. Observe the player and form your opinion based on that. I know it's risky to let them into the team, but then again, you can always remove them and sanction them for abusing their powers. I was refused the moderator position based on a lie which I still know nothing about, except that it's been brought up to me by the person who told me about my application. Nobody ever cared to ask me to tell my part of the story.

The behavior I just explained might seem like it's only visible from inside the team and normal players cannot become aware of it, while in fact, it's visible on the outside too. This leads to my final point in staff-related issues which is the way some staff members speak to normal players. When I joined, I was told to follow a specific manner of speaking and to conduct myself in such a way as to not hurt the company by any means. Unfortunately, I know some staff members who act like they're gods of everything and they have this rude tone to their messages even if it's not their intention. Having a position at Atelier should not mean you are better in any way. Try and act neutral and don't look down on players, because this can hurt the reputation of the company. As a matter of fact, it already did. I know some people who left because they did not like how the staff replied to them. Stop saying "deal with it" and start saying "how can we help you even if you're not getting unbanned." You may ask now, what are we supposed to do with these players, *how could we help them?* For starters, explain why and how they were banned, send them a list of the rules, give them advice to help them grow as a person. Obviously, this only works with people who want to help themselves too. You can't do much with people who just shout at you and just want to be unbanned.

These problems have been present for a very very very long time and no one really cares about fixing anything. The staff isn't being supervised and the administrators just think that everything is working perfectly while everything is getting worse and worse each day. Melibellule and Tigrounette, it's time you look after your company and do thorough research to see what can be, what needs to be, and what must be improved. Onto the second section of the reasons I decided to leave, issues regarding connection between the company and the playerbase.

I don't think it's a surprise to anyone here that the main game of Atelier801, Transformice, is being neglected, while it should be fixed/updated high time. For the past few months, you may have seen increased Twitter, Instagram, Discord, forum activity all due to a few staff members, including me, who was more than glad to help out the social media of the game in hopes of getting a few more players to join the game. With the pandemic, this wasn't that hard and for a few months, Transformice did really well. The tenth birthday happened with actual new content added to the game and everyone seemed to enjoy it. Aaaaand everything turned dark again. We got a buggy rainbow hugging event and now we are stuck with a super old event for one more month. Worst of it all, this old event doesn't even have an announcement which, for me, is a sign that the game is going downhill more and more each day. I offered my help with the posts because I love writing backstories and lore but the company failed to ask me to help with this event and didn't even bother scribbling a small post. I do believe that this helps to connect more with the players and just adds that little piece of new content the game seems to be missing. I'm not a social media manager or a game developer, but it is common sense that summer is the time you should try and gain more players for the game. Students will be home for the summer and this is peak time to add something new to the game that'll attract more people and keep old ones playing for longer too. It's a shame that the company missed out on such an opportunity to easily grab a little more cash. No players want fishing anymore. Not working on your main source of income is a mistake. Of course, we can't make Transformice 100% profitable again, it's a Flash game and we all know the fate of Flash games but I can't find a simple reason to say they should stop updating it and start neglecting it. Hundreds of ideas on the forum, on Discord, and most of them are amazing. With Flash, it's not possible to implement an event in two days but admins could set it as a long term goal and start working on it now. 10 minutes a day is still better than nothing. There's that amazing ice skating event, for instance, and if they started working on it now, it could be ready for winter. Meanwhile, they can work on other projects like Antares or the new dungeon game.

Speaking of these games, you already know it was a mistake to start those projects. Antares does not work on slower PCs at all, meaning most of the playerbase, who plays Transformice because they can't run other complex games, won't even be able to try it. It also includes heavy physics and many mechanical features that are never explained throughout the ship making tutorial, rendering it unappealing to the common player. Controls are very slow and not balanced at all. I hope Meli and Tig will be able to publish the game before the year ends so they don't have to pay back the subsidies they took up for it but then please explain the situation better and actually start working on it. This should be their number one priority and not that other dungeon game with ghosts. Fortunately, I was able to try the dungeon game, and let me tell you, it was a positive experience until Tig decided to make it more complex and add items and players activating traps. The fun was immediately gone after this major change to the gameplay. Simple games do well, complex games not so much. Transformice didn't get popular because you added hundreds of items with different physics and combinations, Tig. This is only my opinion and I'm not going to go in depth with this part because most of you probably don't even know what this is about. The main thing is that the company NEEDS to make a list and prioritize certain points on it. This unorganized workflow really put me off and speaking up about it didn't change one thing.

One thing that Atelier801 always lacked is advertisement. When was the last time you saw TFM or any other game being advertised outside France? You might not have the budget now to do that, Meli, but consider it in the future and set it as a goal. It will help tremendously if you don't just rely on people telling each other about the game. Dead Maze was advertised greatly before the release and considering the current circumstances, it started well. Then it was not advertised, not updated and a lot of new functions were promised that never made the light of day. How hard could it be to release a map editor that already exists to create the main world map? This is why Dead Maze lost traffic and due to Flash, it's nearly impossible to ever make it profitable again. The rest of the games that have been neglected from the start will have the same fate, these should just be closed to cut costs. If it's $5 a month, it's still 5 precious dollars that you can save up and use it more wisely on things that matter.

Finally, the main issue that just has me going a bit crazy... there's still no communication from the administrators even though it's been brought up a thousand times. "We're going to communicate better with you", then do it, please! Even in the staff, we were hardly notified of changes that didn't directly include us. If we asked about news or changes, we got the reply "oh, this changed yes". Why weren't we notified beforehand so that we could at least tell the public? Bug fixes, plans, future games (even if they shouldn't even be planned at this stage), future updates should be published and the public should know about them. It's a time-consuming task for sure, but a well-appreciated one. The audience needs to be kept entertained and if there are no real updates/new functions to do that, then at least post something weekly. Meli has posted a WIP video of the new login screen for Tig's new dungeon explorer game. That's easily what the forum announcement page is missing! I have also been notified that the mod team is currently working on some support bot inside the game which is a great addition and I absolutely love the idea of it but then again, it's been hard digging up information because there is NO ANNOUNCEMENT or any post about it. It's being worked on currently but why shouldn't the players know about it? Players deserve to know what's happening behind the scenes. Leaving them out can be considered rude and will drive them away. The current collector items are in the shop for 3 weeks instead of two... why? If Meli's going on holiday, that's perfectly fine, but not even a single popup saying "Hey, I won't be here for a week". It just sucks and saddens me that such a simple thing can't be done and to the public, it just seems like even the main game, Transformice, isn't being dealt with.

I think that's the end of my little essay here. Many things are far from perfect inside this company and there are not many good things. Unfortunately, even with this post, I am just likely to get a mute or a ban and nothing will get solved. I can be silenced and to me, it does not matter that much but the future of the game depends on correcting the mistakes, not hiding them more. Surveys should be created and things should be changed in order to save the game. There are also other issues like sound effects being all over the place (for which I might publish a survey soon because I promised Meli to help with that and research a little), outdated websites that can be accessed from the main website, translations not working since 2019 November... these ruin the aesthetics of the game and the company.

I believe it was Shamousey (pardon me if it wasn't him) who once said: You have hundreds of staff members trying to help for free, use them.

And to conclude that, you also have hundreds of players trying to help who can't get into the staff for the reasons stated above, use them too.

This is a tedious, boring task that needs to be done but the best solution is to work on what already exists and stop creating new things that will just get left behind in a few years as well. I even find myself yawning at the thought of having to find every misplaced cog in the machine but I can't stress it enough how much it needs to happen.

Thank you everymice for taking your time to read this. I'm interested to see what you think of the issues listed above and don't forget to let the administrators or helpful staff members know about the problems.
You can message the administrators here: https://atelier801.com/contact (Although if your contact letter isn't about e-mail change or password change, there is a high chance it won't be read)

♥ 75

Rainbowhakan #2
« Ciudadano »
14:29

periodt

♥ 15

Error_404 #3
« Cónsul »
14:33

I mean I already know all this stuff. Said it before and I will say it now. Boring, corrupted, and immature staff.

♥ 22

Barberserk #4
« Cónsul »
14:34

Lovely little rant. I agree with everything, sad truths but still facts that need to be addressed.

"I believe it was Shamousey (pardon me if it wasn't him) who once said: You have hundreds of staff members trying to help for free, use them.

And to conclude that, you also have hundreds of players trying to help who can't get into the staff for the reasons stated above, use them too."

These two things right there, we are trying to help, they ignore us. We complain for lack of communication, they ignore us.

Última edición 31/07/2020 14:59

♥ 16

Tigez #5
« Ciudadano »
14:36

Do some digging and you will see that the staff are more likely to accept their friends into the teams rather than strangers who they have never or hardly seen before.

i thought i was the only one who noticed.

♥ 19

Mso #6
« Ciudadano »
14:38

TRUE!!! +1!!

♥ 12

Numkins #7
« Ciudadano »
14:40

I had suspicions that the friend bias was happening, though I don't look too much into the staff themselves. It's a shame that some people are rejected based off of personal issues. I don't believe in any professional setting that bias should be chosen above work potential, but it's to each their own on managing that.

Again, a shame, especially how you're risking being shunned by the community for coming clean. I hope others, if there are who have left the staff team over such things can continue to bring light on this problem.

♥ 16

XIII #8
« Censor »
14:50

I can't wait for the typical response "oh well it's just Meli and Tig now...". Which is a load of horse shit. They used to have other admins and developers. They have had a ton of staff who have offered to help them out over the years. They could have fixed a lot of stuff before it got this bad. They *chose* not to. They should do themselves a favor and drop or temporarily shelve every other project they have right now (that isn't reliant on subsidies, etc) and put a lot more effort in to fixing what is wrong with their main source of income. I hate to put it that way, as TFM is a great game, but it really does look like the admins don't give two shits about the game beyond the money they make from it.

"Do some digging and you will see that the staff are more likely to accept their friends into the teams rather than strangers who they have never or hardly seen before."
You don't even need to dig to see that. The staff roles have been very cliquey for years.

♥ 15

Lelianna #9
« Ciudadano »
14:51

ACTUALLY!! if you look, they have a new admin named Acnun#0001, pretty sus if you ask me

♥ 2

Jealy #10
« Censor »
14:55

When staff members are friends with an applicant beforehand it's obviously easier to know whether or not that person is suited for staff. Literally anybody can write a good application if they really want to, doesn't mean their actual behaviour belongs anywhere near a staff position, and who better to know this than their friends? Being friends with or being completely anonymous to the staff both have their advantages and disadvantages.

And by the way, people would complain a lot more if staff accepted everyone based on their application alone.

♥ 15

Perfecteca #11
« Senador »
14:57

Neither this thread should be locked or you should be punished for that. I'm not into long texts but I managed to read all, and I never said 'Oh, no. You're wrong.' while doing that.
Edit: Also shouldn't be deleted

Última edición 31/07/2020 16:07

♥ 12

Error_404 #12
« Cónsul »
15:00

> — Jealy dijo:
> When staff members are friends with an applicant beforehand it's obviously easier to know whether or not that person is suited for staff. Literally anybody can write a good application if they really want to, doesn't mean their actual behaviour belongs anywhere near a staff position, and who better to know this than their friends? Being friends with or being completely anonymous to the staff both have their advantages and disadvantages.
>
> And by the way, people would complain a lot more if staff accepted everyone based on their application alone.

So why the application if that is going straight into trash and you are basing your judgement on friends and recommendations.

♥ 9

Barberserk #13
« Cónsul »
15:03

> — Jealy dijo:
> When staff members are friends with an applicant beforehand it's obviously easier to know whether or not that person is suited for staff. Literally anybody can write a good application if they really want to, doesn't mean their actual behaviour belongs anywhere near a staff position, and who better to know this than their friends? Being friends with or being completely anonymous to the staff both have their advantages and disadvantages.
>
> And by the way, people would complain a lot more if staff accepted everyone based on their application alone.

Nobody likes favo in game, which stands for favoritism. Down with the cliques.

♥ 5

Sofstatic #14
« Ciudadano »
15:05

Everyone who is ''into'' the game is probably well aware of most the things you said.

I would like to agree big time about people being favoed when it comes to choose new staff members. I think thats meli's and tig's fault because honestly you cant let staff choose new staff? obviously it will be corrupted because as you said its easier to get a job if you know the owner. So if we use common sense when it comes to voting people will say ''good'' stuff about friends and probably wont bother looking into ''randoms'' which is bad. I think everyones deserve a chance to get into the team if they really want to even with a decent application? if they dont perfome well you are free to fire them or remove them anytime.

I would like to add something probably off-topic? ImO i think staff should stop using alts and work together instead of trying to hide? we always hear there are people modding on alts or main accounts if they have alts as public mods. Honestly its hard for people to communicate with mods for anything (from a question to a ban or a convo). Yes im well aware you guys get a lot of whispers at once and thats probably because you have 1 en mod online and 10 private ones and so on.

Sadly tig and meli ignored the fact that people liked transformice and not some other 2d games which is why all their rest 4-5 games failed. spent a lot of money and time into things that people werent really interested and this is the outcome. A company that barely has money-people to work with.
Well the outcome would be the same after years yes. People would leave because they get older or lose interested but surely they couldve kept a lot more players if they didnt bring back the same events-add new stuff into the game (not furs and items). A lot of things could be different but it is what it is. Everyone knows at this point they are just trying to keep the game online. We will not get any updates or new stuff to enjoy so we are basically playing a game without future but we still like it :^)

As for the people who are complaining about bans i would like to be honest most of them are using third program stuff. But they just complain anyways.

> — Jealy dijo:
> When staff members are friends with an applicant beforehand it's obviously easier to know whether or not that person is suited for staff. Literally anybody can write a good application if they really want to, doesn't mean their actual behaviour belongs anywhere near a staff position, and who better to know this than their friends? Being friends with or being completely anonymous to the staff both have their advantages and disadvantages.
>
> And by the way, people would complain a lot more if staff accepted everyone based on their application alone.

You are basically saying its pointless for people who dont know staff to try to be a part of something that game offers to ''everyone'' ''Help their community'' You guys are supposed to stalk applicants and see how they act in game and if their application is not just a paper thing no? anyone can be suitable for the position as long as they are following the rules and do their job. obviously better than some public mods atm

Última edición 31/07/2020 15:18

♥ 9

Jealy #15
« Censor »
15:06

> — Error_404 dijo:
> > — Jealy dijo: Ver
>
> So why the application if that is going straight into trash and you are basing your judgement on friends and recommendations.

To show interest in the position you're applying for, and to let the staff get to know things about you if they don't already.

> — dijo:
> You are basically saying its pointless for people who dont know staff to try to be a part of something that game offers to ''everyone'' ''Help their community''

Yes, that's exactly what I'm saying. Thanks for understanding my post. (it's not actually what I was saying if it wasn't clear, please read staff posts)

Última edición 31/07/2020 17:36

♥ 2

Departure #16
« Ciudadano »
15:21

I agree with the getting accepted into staff part, a lot of the people who are accepted are most likely friends with a lot of the members. or known to them. It feels as if you're not then it feels like you're just judged and discarded. But if you're their friend or related to that then they have more of an interest. I kinda skip-read a lot of this but yeah, the part about getting told stuff like updates, etc. it is fair getting told but staff are just the same as normal players at the end of the day but with powers. it would make no sense staff getting told first because they are the same like everyone else, but even if staff were told stuff first, yes it might help certain questions players might have, etc, but It would make a lot more sense if everyone just got told all together. This way it wouldn't make you feel like you need to be any sort of staff position to be valued just to be told stuff. It's the same with those staff tribes, I do get a certain point about them, but to be staff just to get accepted into a tribe? It would be way nicer if you they said something like 'sorry, we are not accepting invites at the moment' It's just weird. I feel like it would be well nicer than just being told something like 'you need to be our close friend or staff' It makes you feel like those tribes have something against players who aren't staff, and even people who are their